



# Digital State Survey 2001

## Social Services and Law Enforcement and the Courts **BEST OF BREED PROGRAMS**

*Presented By*

CENTER FOR

**DIGITAL**

GOVERNMENT

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*Building Electronic Government for the 21st Century*

Digital States Survey 2001  
Social Services  
and  
Law Enforcement and The Courts  
Best of Breed Programs

Presented by the Center for Digital Government

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# Introduction

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The Center for Digital Government is pleased to present our report on *Best of Breed Programs* based on *Part I of the 2001 Digital State Survey, Social Services and Law Enforcement and The Courts*. Our purpose in creating this report is to help government approach information technology (IT) projects in a new way and avoid reinventing ideas and concepts. We hope the projects and strategies presented in the case studies help government leaders share good ideas.

In producing this report, we provided contact information to make it easy for IT leaders to use it as a tool. The case studies include summaries of the overall project components and insight into the best practices. This review of others' experiences gives IT leaders the opportunity to analyze how organizations have internally implemented IT projects. We hope this information will help others look at their projects in a different way.

As we finalized this report, a common theme prevailed – communication affects how today's IT projects get implemented and accepted by users and stakeholders. We know that it's no longer about bits and bytes of technology. It's about a kind of cultural change in how projects are managed. The old industrial approach of top-down enforcement has been replaced with Information Age strategies that call for more communication, more information, and more team building. Whether it's a project manager hiring a change management consultant or an IT manager developing a real-time Web site where users give their feedback, it's about how leaders involved other organizations; how they got buy-in from key stakeholders; how they got executive sponsorships, etc.

The *Best of Breed Programs* highlighted show that collaboration is the key ingredient in establishing successful IT projects. This idea seems to be universal and applies whether it's a one-stop social services shop or an integrated offender database. We hope IT leaders enjoy the case studies and find the information beneficial.

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## Social Services

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### Florida

#### Department of Children and Families

Florida System

Web site: [http://www.state.fl.us/cf\\_web/](http://www.state.fl.us/cf_web/)

Contact: Courtney Griffith

Tel: 850-410-4777

#### BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY

- *Monthly meetings between the technical and analytical sides of the house create an atmosphere of personal responsibility and open communication between team members as they plan and maintain the Florida System.*

Since government and a growing number of citizens have Web access, it has behooved many agencies to implement Web-enabling projects. One such program is the Florida Department of Children and Families, which is piloting Web-enablement of its major eligibility system, the Florida On-Line Recipient Integrated Database Access (FLORIDA) System.

The FLORIDA System provides eligibility information for multiple agencies and programs – Department of Health, Agency for Health Care Information, Department of Revenue, Agency for Workforce Innovation, and other Department of Children and Families programs. It also serves as a major social services data exchange with other state and federal agencies, including Vital Statistics and the Social Security Administration.

“The overall program provides clearance screening for 22 million individuals who apply for or receive state assistance,” said Kim Brock, chief of technologies and system development at the Department of Children and Families.

It contains the following features: online interviewing support; data collection to determine compliance with rules for cash, food stamps or Medicaid; data exchange with over 100 different entities to provide external sources; notices to clients; an interface with the electronic benefits technology services to access cash and food stamps via a debit card; benefits recovery component for fraud or failure to report information; and support to recoup overpayments.”

The Web portion is in a practical pilot phase to demonstrate the efficiencies to the workforce. Program leaders are examining training and ease of use. “If the pilot is successful we will start looking at the client

self-service aspect and its potential functionality,” said Randy Niewenhous, chief information officer at Department of Children and Families. “What we’re really looking at is using technology to leverage our investment in an already solid, stable system. The question is, ‘How can we do that without trashing the original system?’ We want to be able to use Web technology to benefit our service providers and clients.”

The FLORIDA System has already been applying a Web-enabled data warehouse that has been in production for many months. “We rolled it out to the supervisor-level staff in the field,” said Brock. “We’ve created an environment where folks can manage with data for the first time with Web technology. We’re in the testing phase and plan to go to the next level of online analytical processing to enhance our ability to evaluate data and manage workforce issues and case-load growth problems without having to use paper.”

While the Web pilot continues, the FLORIDA System itself is an excellent example of state-of-the-art technology running almost flawlessly. “Our downtime on this system is zero,” said Brock. “Its success stems from the best practice of blurring the lines between system developers and analysts that each work on different sides of the house. The technical people do testing while the analysts provide requirements to improve product delivery.”

This effort is accomplished through monthly meetings where the group goes through all 18 modules comparing them to program requirements. “We try to figure out whether each issue is an easy or tough fix, and then we prioritize nearly 100 changes each month,” said Niewenhous. “This synergy between group members creates a sense of responsibility for each other – especially since our reputation is based on how well the entire system performs. This open communication is one of our core best practices.”

It is this kind of thoughtful planning, teamwork and communication that are making innovative projects like the system’s Web-enablement pilot more than just an idea on paper. “Essentially, the system is a well-oiled machine that takes care of the day-to-day business and provides stability and reliability,” added Niewenhous. “This stability plans well for the future as we look to use of the Internet and Web-based technology to continue to help serve people in the state who are receiving social services benefits.”

## Idaho

### Electronic Benefits Transfer System

Department of Health and Welfare

Web site: [http://www2.state.id.us/dhw/hwgd\\_www/home.html](http://www2.state.id.us/dhw/hwgd_www/home.html)

Contact: Charles Wright

Tel: 208-334-6666

#### BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY

- *Governor-supported meetings with key stakeholders resolved issues related to the Electronic Benefits Transfer System's new cash capabilities.*
- *A consolidated enterprise system managed by a single provider makes it possible to provide benefits using private-sector methods such as direct deposit.*

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare set up an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) System that is a cost-effective example of how to provide a breadth of payments via a single benefits card.

Idaho implemented the system for food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and state supplement payments statewide on February 1, 1998. In September 2000, the department added child support payments and made the food stamp program 100 percent EBT-based.

Several payments on a single card required the development of a cooperative effort among departments and divisions and the service provider Citicorp Services Inc., which won the seven-year contract set to expire June 30, 2003. While the potential for problems existed with a project this size, officials said it went smoothly among all parties involved.

"I don't remember a lot of headaches involved in the initial development," said Brad Baird, project manager. "The contract negotiations caused a little [trouble], but it got quickly worked out."

Additionally, the project was not restricted to just the state of Idaho. As the procurement process got under way, other states became involved. The initial project specifications and final RFP were developed through a joint RFP with the state of Colorado. Idaho worked with Colorado because it was adopting Quest Rules, which are national standards for processing EBT that permit interoperability between states. The joint effort evolved to include a coalition of five other states – Arizona, Alaska, Washington, Nevada and Hawaii. The coalition was formed to get a better value from the supplier, Citicorp.

Once the contract was established, the system became functional and added child support payments to the card in September 2000. The project also expanded to include cash payments from programs such as TANF and state supplements. These features provided the option of electronic funds transfer or direct deposit to personal bank accounts.



While the addition of these features sounded straightforward, it posed one of the program's few challenges. "There was a lot of concern on the behalf of retailers that were worried about being reimbursed for cash payments, such as food stamps," explained Baird. "The key to resolving that issue was getting our governor involved. Once Gov. Dirk Kempthorne [supported] the process and we met with the Retailer's Association, the uprising went away."

While it might be expected that so many cash features on a single card might complicate the system, it hasn't been an issue. Baird emphasized it's a fairly simple system. He explained that payment files are combined and transmitted to Citicorp that processes the information and adds the benefits to the accounts. In describing how the system has affected his department, he said, "We've become a kind of automated clearinghouse – a pass-through system within our agency."

"It's also more beneficial to add as many programs as possible to a single card," said Charlie Wright, project manager from the department's Division of Information Technology. "It keeps costs down by allowing expenses to be shared and funded by different sources."

Additionally, since the counties play a role in benefits payments, Wright said that it's important to have a consolidated system at that level. "It's much easier to work with a single county system if you only have to interface one system into the EBT. Integrating disparate systems into EBT makes it more of a struggle."

The real success of the program shows in the estimated cost savings to taxpayers. Estimates reveal the EBT food stamp program will be cost-neutral by June 30, 2001. It is projected that the state will save approximately \$4.6 million in the food stamp program from June 30, 2001 to the end of the contract period. On the cash side, Idaho also projects the cost of issuing a paper warrant at \$15 per warrant. Idaho is currently paying .10 cents for each direct deposit and \$1.24 for each EBT transaction. This results in a \$700,000 per month savings for the state. This would be an approximate savings of \$19.6 million from March 2001 through the end of the contract.



**Michigan  
HelpWorks**

Family Independence Agency

Web site:

[http://www.michigan.gov/eMI/CDA/eMI\\_CDA\\_Frame/1,1307,,00.html?frameURL=http://www.mfia.state.mi.us](http://www.michigan.gov/eMI/CDA/eMI_CDA_Frame/1,1307,,00.html?frameURL=http://www.mfia.state.mi.us)

Michigan Department of Community Health

Web site:

[http://www.michigan.gov/eMI/CDA/eMI\\_CDA\\_Frame/1,1307,,00.html?frameURL=http://www.mdch.state.mi.us](http://www.michigan.gov/eMI/CDA/eMI_CDA_Frame/1,1307,,00.html?frameURL=http://www.mdch.state.mi.us)

Contact: Jim Hogan

Tel: 517-241-5747

**BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY**

- *A series of meetings is used to blend the HelpWorks system on all levels and make it accessible via the Internet.*
- *A consultant worked with the system provider to ensure the software meets eligibility programming requirements.*

HelpWorks, a new application developed by the Michigan Family Independence Agency and the Department of Community Health, is providing a great service to communities. Its innovative patient intake application is helping citizens receive better services more efficiently from state assistance programs, such as Healthy Kids, WIC (Women, Infants and Children), Food Stamps, Family Independence Program (TANF), day care, and MICHild.

Currently in its pilot phase one, HelpWorks is providing Internet access to eligibility workers for 10 hospitals, health departments and one federally qualified health center in the state of Michigan. Its overall goal is to reduce the intake workload of the caseworkers by pre-screening clients that would otherwise have to go through an initial interview with caseworkers.

It was funded through the Medicaid Match, which provides a 75 percent contribution to the state's 25 percent match. The application, using PMA's Expert Eligibility Server technology that can be accessed through the Internet, screens for benefits or services and creates a tailored interview. Users are guided through the screen to gather all essential information. Depending on the client's characteristics and the programs being sought, the screening can be very short or much more in-depth. A single interview can screen for multiple programs, whether they're related or not. It also delivers a seamless interview while assessing eligibility for each program individually.

The application conducts benefit screenings based on rules organized as benefit libraries. Jim Hogan, senior project manager, Family, Health & Wellness Services, explained that defining all the rules of each program's eligibility requirements was one of its few challenges.

This effort required a completely supportive atmosphere from the participating hospitals and health centers. A series of meetings took place where all the eligibility requirements were blended into a single intake program. It took about three weeks to refine the rules and resolve all the issues.

Additionally, the state had to send a consultant to meet with the contractor, Peter Martin Associates, to ensure the software would be conducive to eligibility programming criteria. “The end result of this meeting was correct logic to do eligibility assessments with an 80 percent accuracy rate,” said Bonnie Barnes, manager of Eligibility Quality Assurance Section at the Michigan Department of Community Development.

Out of all that work, the current software evolved to a point that it is helping to meet the goal of the program to improve customer service. “We are trying to find out in one place if people qualify for multiple areas of social services,” said Hogan. “We also hope that the prescreening tool better prepares clients for the next step – the interview. Instead of arriving for the interview without important documents like W2 forms, a driver’s license, proof of residence, etc., the prescreen process tells users to bring those items. This prevents caseworkers from wasting their time on needless appointments for those who do not qualify or need to reschedule appointments.”

The program’s success can be measured by the number of benefits it provides. The benefits include: increasing the monthly number of day-care providers opting to use electronic billing; reducing the effort required by the state to transcribe information from the manually submitted timesheets; reducing payment delays for care providers because of incomplete or inaccurate information; reducing mailing costs for the care providers as well as the state.

“The program makes things more efficient,” said Hogan. “It prevents us from having to send people home to get information, screens out folks who are not eligible for services, expedites the intake process, gives people directions right on the spot and prints them out, and more. It’s been so helpful we hope to expand it to include electronic capture of information.”

**Washington**

**SKIES**

Washington State Employment Security

Web site: <http://www.wa.gov/esd/skies/>

Contact: Stan Ditterline

Tel: 360-902-3574

**BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY**

- *Project leaders established an Executive Steering Committee comprising top-level managers from the participating agencies and began face-to-face meetings about every six weeks.*
- *They published a bi-weekly newsletter, called Forecast that addressed design updates and ongoing progress.*
- *They developed a Web site with information and a questions-and-answers section.*
- *They encouraged users to participate on the demo site.*

The integration of programs, especially social services, can create more than the usual stresses especially when a number of state and local jurisdictions are involved. Washington State Employment Security found itself in that situation as it launched its new Services, Knowledge and Information Exchange System (SKIES).

In Washington, WorkSource one-stop centers provide employment and training services by state and local governments and public and private sector organizations and have the goal of integrating separate programs into seamless service delivery for both job seekers and employers. Data sharing agreements allow service providers to share information, thus providing the best possible services to their customers. SKIES is the primary information system used by WorkSource partners.

SKIES facilitates data sharing among WorkSource agencies to comply with the directives of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). It provides three primary functions: management information, performance information, and case management. The program gives social service providers access to common client records related to services.

A project of this size required funding from several sources. It received a One-Stop implementation grant for \$1.9 million from the Department Labor. Wagner Peyser and WIA funding (both grant programs offered from the Department of Labor) supported 35 percent of the remaining cost. The project's total was \$4.6 million.

While funding seemed to come together with few problems, coordinating a project of this scope required careful management and political finesse. The first issue was finding a way to persuade local agencies to not just upgrade their old systems, but also completely replace them with SKIES. The SKIES management team managed to successfully face this situation and solve it.

“Initially, the local jurisdictions made the assumption they would maintain an interface with the state,” said Peggy Zimmerman, project manager. “Once they saw how SKIES worked they realized they were going to have to give up their local system – and that’s a big deal.”

Since many of the local agencies weren’t particularly interested in making that kind of sacrifice, Zimmerman and her colleagues at State Employment Security concluded communication would be the best practice strategy.

“We realized we were going to have to keep everyone informed,” said Thomas Bynum, assistant commissioner for information technology. “It was communication, communication, communication. We had to make sure everyone understood what we were doing, explain the system, address problems, and answer questions.”

In order to address communication needs, they established an Executive Steering Committee made up of top-level managers from the participating agencies and began face-to-face meetings about every six weeks. They also published a bi-weekly newsletter, called *Forecast* that addressed design updates and ongoing progress. And they developed a Web site with information and a questions-and-answers section.

“Anyone who wanted to be on the demo site, we said, ‘No problem,’” added Zimmerman. “We welcomed them viewing what the application would look like and providing feedback.”

All of this coordination paid off. “It really helped us establish policy and good key practices such as issues management,” said Stan Ditterline, senior technology management consultant. “We reviewed issues on a weekly basis and quickly resolved them. I think the processes used here have kept the project on track.”

Currently, the system is being tested and its first iteration completed. Zimmerman is also examining application of a train-the-trainer model to train between 2,000 and 2,500 front-line users. Then the focus will shift from pilot training to statewide training efforts. The entire system is expected to be fully operational by November 2001.

**Kansas**

**Kansas Aging Management Information System**

Department on Aging

Web site: <http://www.k4s.org/kdoa/>

Contact: Steven Johnson

Tel: 785-296-5875

**BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY**

- *In order to create KAMIS' integrated database, project managers created open channels of communications with affiliated organizations by putting information on the Web, having local groups check the quality of the data, and sending out e-mail messages to keep people apprised.*
- *The sensitive nature of the information required an extra layer of security be developed to protect it.*

The Kansas Aging Management Information System (KAMIS) is a preventative tool designed to help seniors stay healthy and happy in their homes. Developed by the Kansas Department on Aging, KAMIS provides specific information about its clients for caseworkers to determine which state-assisted program will serve their clients' needs. This information also helps pinpoint the appropriate time when it's necessary for seniors to go into a nursing facility.

Launched in May 1998, KAMIS was developed by the prime contractor Computer Technology Associates (now known as CTA) from a contract valued at \$2.6 million. It services seven nutrition providers and 11 regional agencies on aging that are either non-profit organizations or branches of county government. These organizations then contract with over 1,100 service providers, 350 of which are nursing facilities.

The Department on Aging's responsibilities includes state-level oversight, funding, quality review checks, and cross checks of records to ensure the services are being provided. "And we have to coordinate with area agencies to do the same thing," said Steve Johnson, director of Information Services, Department on Aging.

KAMIS simplifies these efforts by providing a data foundation for integrating all aging software created or managed by the Kansas Department of Administration. As the implementation of KAMIS matures, other PC-based application will be reviewed and incorporated into it.

Other applications have been either added or will be added. For example, an interface to the Medicaid Management Information System, which links KAMIS to the state's payment authorization system, was recently added.

All of this information pulled together and integrated into one database required program managers to successfully work with the affiliated organizations. With so many people involved, the key to making it work was to develop an open channel of communication.

“We had to make sure the local groups were getting what they needed,” said Johnson. “At every stage, we let people know what we were doing. We put information on the Web, did test runs, and had local groups check the quality of the data. We also sent e-mail messages to keep people apprised of our status. It was about keeping people informed and engaged and letting them tell us what was or wasn’t working.”

Security was another issue that officials had to give due consideration. The sensitive nature of the information being gathered warranted this action. This is why program officials took particular care to implement a strong security layer to the application.

“We have a lot of private information about our clients that talks about their health, finances and living situations,” said Johnson. “We also have confidential information about our service providers that includes billing information. So, we’ve had to put this information in a central repository and put management controls over it to protect it from hackers.”

Overall, the program’s real success is less technical and more personal. It is helping state officials work effectively with the aging population to make better decisions about their health and welfare.

“The program allows us to make a better analysis of customer data,” added Johnson. “A better analysis means we target funds more intelligently and reduce admission rates to nursing facilities. It’s better for everybody if we keep seniors in the community longer. There is simply no way to quantitatively measure the value of a better management decision.”

**Nebraska**

**NFOCUS**

Health and Human Services System

Web site: <http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/>

Contact: Margo Gamet

Tel: 402-471-9318

**BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY**

- *Since NFOCUS offers all of its 25 benefits through a single integrated service, staff had to be cross-trained to do one job versus multiple jobs.*

Many states offer one-stop access to social services programs; however, the state of Nebraska's one-stop health and human services system goes a step further. While most programs provide limited services through one-stop portals, the Nebraska Family Online Client User System (NFOCUS) offers all of its 25 benefits through a single integrated service.

Launched in 1991, NFOCUS provides access to benefit information to all of the state's 2,500 social service workers. Some of the benefits include Aid to Aged, Blind, Disabled, Aid to Dependent Children, Adult Protective Services, Child Care, Children and Family Services, Emergency Assistance, Food Stamp Program, Former Ward, Employment First, Independent Living, Subsidized Adoption, and more.

The system uses an interview with decision-logic (also known as an Expert System) to guide the eligibility determination process. All rules of eligibility are built into the application, which provides increased speed with greater consistency to the process. Eligibility is an open service, because the client can watch the entire process in real time, during the interactive interview. There is no delay like there is with a paper-based system.

NFOCUS began out of a desire to integrate information systems that had been built independently over a 25- to 30-year period with no consistency among them. "We had to do things by multiple entries into multiple systems," said Margo Gamet, applications services manager for Information Systems and Technology, Health and Human Services System. "It was easy to duplicate efforts and hard to check. Also, we were interested in moving away from dumb terminals and mainframes to client/server applications."

Once the system was migrated to client/server technology, it was merged with the Child Welfare Information System – a program that makes it stand out from other state's systems. "I think we're the only state that includes Child Welfare benefits (e.g. state wards, foster care, risk assessment, etc.) in a single system," said Gamet. "We were able to accomplish this goal, because our program is state-driven vs. county-driven. And we're one of the smaller states."



System funding came from state and federal money. Phase one, the original NFOCUS application without the child welfare module, was built for \$41.9 million; with 35 percent of the cost paid for by the state and the remainder financed from the federal program FAMIS (Family Assistance Management Information Systems). The child welfare component cost \$16.9 million; with 25 percent of the cost funded by the state and the remainder funded by the federal program SACWIS (State Automated Child Welfare Systems).

The original system was built from a request for response (RFR) in which Andersen Consulting (now known as Accenture) won the contract. Ongoing project upgrades are currently being “body shopped,” meaning the managers are purchasing services from various consultants authorized to do business with the state.

The project’s actual construction presented few hurdles; however, system maintenance posed a challenge. Health and human services workers previously accustomed to performing one job had to be cross-trained to do all jobs. “We rewrote job descriptions, updated salaries, and eliminated specialization,” explained Gamet.

All of this work and training has paid off. Now a client comes to the department with the proper documents and can be out with their benefits on the way in one day. “Using the old system, eligibility was determined in 30 days or more,” said Gamet. “Using the new system, a client is in and out after a two-hour interview, and they know their results on the spot.”

## Montana

### Virtual Pavilion

Department of Public Health and Human Services

Web site: <http://vhsp.dphhs.state.mt.us/>

Contact: Mike Billings

Tel: 406-444-4133

### BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY

- *The Department of Public Health and Human Services cut a deal with the Department of Labor to build an online search system that everyone in the state could use to find a job.*
- *Staff had to use personal powers of persuasion to get all levels of government to give up their “turf” and create a unified system.*

If you’re a citizen in need of a job or day-care services, the Montana Virtual Pavilion can help you. Built as a human services one-stop Web site, the Pavilion provides assistance to clientele who visit the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Whether a user requires access from home or a public place, the system is available.

The Pavilion was constructed out of the need to meet welfare reform requirements initiated at the federal level back in the early 1990s. Initially, the department went to the Legislature to ask for 60 new people to help it meet those requirements, but the Legislature denied the request. Instead, it suggested using technology to solve the problem.

The technological solution soon evolved into a Web-enabled project. Called the Virtual Pavilion, it was built to be user friendly, with an easy navigation path constructed around “The Rotunda,” which is a virtual capitol dome. Once a user goes inside The Rotunda, he or she will find buttons for Human Services, Justice, Commerce, Labor & Industry, Governor’s Office, Education, State Homepage, and Register to Vote.

“We wanted to create the Pavilion so that anybody could sit down, dial up the site, click on the capitol, and open all these doors to services,” said Mike Billings, administrator of Operations and Technology Division, Department of Public Health and Human Services. “We really used the doors as a metaphor on how a user could go into a department and do something like a job search.”

One of the project’s first components addressed the need to build an online job search system for the department’s clients. The old state job service didn’t list minimum wage jobs. In the meantime, the department was dealing with a labor force that largely consisted of unskilled workers with little or no education. So, the department cut a deal with the Department of Labor and Industry to build an online

search system that everyone in the state could use to find a job. The resulting database was constructed using Oracle Web applications.

As the project progressed, it managed to successfully add a wealth of features to the job search function. The features include a search engine that allows users to search by region, city, job description, salary requirements, and more. Other features are job registration by users, employer job registration, and more. It also added other human services, such as the day-care search, Medicaid eligibility, online access for medical providers regarding claims, and payment information.

While the project currently provides a wealth of services, it's doing it in a relatively cost-effective manner. The entire project was funded over a six-year period at a total cost of \$2 million, with \$100,000 a year for ongoing maintenance requirements handled on contract with private company TRW (the project was actually built by in-house staff).

"TRW acts as our eyes and ears and does the maintenance work for us," said Billings. "They do Web programming and tap into other Web sites to link to our site. They can help us identify those Web sites because they have national exposure."

While cost effectiveness stands out as a plus to the project, the real success came from Billings and his staff's ability to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and entrenched attitudes. Billings explained that one of the site's features determines welfare eligibility. If children are involved in the process, it requires proof of birth.

"Items like birth records were maintained at the county level," said Billings. "In the past, we had to write and request a birth certificate and that could take over a week. We wanted to put this information online and eliminate the wait; but to do this we had to overcome entrenched points of view or turf issues. Persuading the counties to support us was a serious challenge. Especially since many jobs would eventually disappear. We made them understand they needed to support our mission and now birth information can be obtained in 30 seconds vs. seven days."

Overall, the project has improved efficiency by steering users to the right places. It has also increased the speed of eligibility determination and improved overall access to information.

## Texas

### Integrated Administrative System

Health and Human Services Commission

Web site: <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/>

Contact: Cindy Peck

Tel: 512-424-6516

### BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY

- *An enterprise work group was assembled to devise a common implementation strategy and enterprise requirements for the Integrated Administrative System.*
- *With 13 agencies and different personalities involved, the project required a democratic approach with the ultimate “veto” power resting in the hands of the commissioner of Health and Human Services Commission.*

In government, agencies tend not to share resources or systems; however, as technology evolves and makes it possible to create enterprise systems used by all, many states are implementing those kinds of applications. This kind of system recently launched in the state of Texas where the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is spearheading the implementation of an integrated administrative system to ultimately be utilized by all health-and-human-service-related departments.

The HHSC started planning the administrative system in August 1999 when the Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) and Department of Information Resources approached officials at HHSC regarding funding the purchase of the enterprise license for PeopleSoft. Utilization of the PeopleSoft application would allow the state to standardize administrative processes, such as core financial systems.

HHSC then convened a work group of Health and Human Services (HHS) chief financial officers and chief information officers to assess the value of using 1999 lapsed funds to purchase the enterprise license and gauge agency interest in the system. Indications were that a long-term strategy of moving toward standardization of financial and human resource information throughout the HHS agencies would provide many advantages to the HHSC and the agencies, as well as improve the quality and accuracy of information.

The enterprise work group also devised a common implementation strategy and enterprise requirements for four modules that would address core financial activities. With 13 agencies and different personalities involved, planning the project required a democratic approach with the ultimate “veto” power resting in the hands of the HHSC and its commissioner.

“While everyone wanted their way, our group has legislative authority to make it happen,” said Cindy Peck, director of Information Resources Management Division at the HHSC. “This authority gives us

leverage. The goal was to persuade the staff to understand that they needed to look at a new way of doing business. We needed a consensus on that level to get everyone to buy into it.”

The HHSC’s authority combined with strong executive leadership ultimately ironed out the differences of opinion. “The commissioner gave them every opportunity to have input, and was supportive of their concerns,” explained Peck. “If it came down to a decision that couldn’t gain consensus, we would step in and make the decision – but we really didn’t have to do that.”

Finally, a Request for Offer (RFO) for the core financial modules was developed and released in spring 2000. At this point, the HHSC initiated the structure for inter-agency coordination to develop the contract, which was awarded in summer 2000. Contract activities soon began to put the core financial modules into production in summer 2001.

While 13 agencies participated the program’s development, it boiled down to two agencies – the Department of Health and the HHSC -- actually implementing it to date. “It was all about department readiness,” said Peck. “The Department of Health had the money set aside and the HHSC piggy-backed onto what they were doing by adding funds to its system.”

The remaining agencies are expected to begin using the financial modules over the next two years and the human resources applications over the next five years.

While it’s still a work in progress, the application shows considerable promise in terms of potential benefits. “There were some agencies that had like 100 different administrative systems within the agency,” said Peck. “We’re going to replace three-fourths of those systems with our application. This will save considerable money from a reduction in the required IT staff to run these systems. And who knows what efficiencies there are to be gained when you have everybody doing something one way.”

## Law Enforcement and The Courts

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### Utah

#### O-TRACK

Department of Corrections

Web site: <http://www.cr.ex.state.ut.us/>

Contact: Gae Lynn DeLand

Tel: 801-265-5508

#### BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY

- *Lack of funds for O'TRACK required IT leaders to be creative and throw away the rules and standard practices of spending three or four years doing system development and design. Change orders were also thrown out under the idea of adding extras at a later date.*
- *IT leaders also pursued joint development with other states by using official inquiries about the system to develop relationships.*

O'TRACK was developed as a way to solve a communications problem among all agencies involved in tracking offenders through Utah's criminal justice system. As an offender passes through each phase from sentencing to incarceration, a record follows him or her. In the past, the paper files might lag two weeks behind the offender's movements. Now with O'TRACK, the information is available in real time.

Additionally, O'TRACK provides access to other law enforcement agencies and has enabled police and sheriffs immediate access to information they have needed to solve cases much quicker. Notifications and warrants between Corrections and Board of Pardons reduce the time required to bring a parole violator back to the prison or a "half-way back" location.

O'TRACK is also being used by the Office of Education. Utah State Prison is providing basic data on offenders from O'TRACK to the Office of Education's computer database. This information enables them to efficiently schedule and program inmates for educational programs, etc. The Office of Education provides educational services at the prison. The education system then provides O'TRACK information on class enrollments, attendance, progress, grades, etc.

O'TRACK was initially conceived back in 1990 as a solution to the Y2K problem; however, as the project evolved it provided an answer to other problems. "We had to replace two antiquated systems," said Gae Lynn DeLand, director of Information Technology at the Department of Corrections. "One was a 27-year-old system on a state mainframe and the other was from a company called Wang that went out of business."

The replacement of these systems brought the funding issues into focus. After exploring options on how to replace the old systems and developing a high-level master plan, DeLand searched for a contractor that could not only provide the technology, but also do it within a budget. Since she had prior funds of \$400,000 approved by the Legislature to purchase a new Wang system (Wang was by then out of business), she knew she had money to spend.

First, she and her staff determined they would build their own platform, but only after ruling out other vendors' proposals. They went with HP9000 series of hardware and purchased an Informix database with PowerBuilder on the front end. Then they went through the RFP process to purchase the rest of the system. The minimum bid from Informix came in at \$4 million.

After haggling back and forth with the state to obtain additional funding, DeLand's group still came up short. So, she got creative. "We started going after lots of grants and figuring out how to use internal money," she explained. "We also threw away all of the rules and standard practices like spending three or four years doing system design. We said, 'okay' and divided the system up into modules and threw out change orders. We decided the bells and whistles could be added later."

The project continued forward, but then funds ran low again. Once more, DeLand got creative. She started receiving questionnaires from other states about the project. She would fill them out, wait two weeks, call the state, and propose joint development. This meant the state could get the system a lot cheaper and Utah could augment its funds with the other state's help.

Alaska was the first state to join. Later New Mexico signed on, and then the system had three states working together. "Today the O'TRACK base system is finished. We're only missing a few bells and whistles," said DeLand.

Currently, Colorado has also joined the group and is using the system to build its medical system. Utah will eventually use Colorado's medical system to turn around and build its pharmacy system.

In the end, DeLand's perseverance and tenacity paid off. She and her staff proved it's possible to fund just about any project. "Now we have a \$7 million system built with Utah funds and money from federal and state sources," she said. "It's in production; it's proven. And Utah owns the system. Next, we're going to form a consortium with other states to plan for future technology that will be added to the core system. Overall, we've stretched the money, and it's been a win-win situation for everyone."



**Iowa**

**TraCS**

Department of Transportation

Web site: <http://www.dot.state.ia.us/>

Contact: Mary Jensen

Tel: 515-237-3235

**BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY**

- *TraCS provides a Software Development Kit, which adds flexibility for local agencies to make new forms to add to the package and permits other states to modify it to be used with their forms.*
- *Custom flexibility was developed from user input from officers on the street who provided feedback.*
- *The software is offered royalty-free to other interested states as part of a provision of a federal grant received by the department.*

The Iowa Department of Transportation's (DOT) Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS) intelligently utilizes technology to solve field data collection needs. Launched in 1993 and developed by DOT, TraCS is used statewide by 160 local law enforcement agencies, the Iowa State Patrol and Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

The program consists of a mobile client Microsoft Windows-based application. It allows law enforcement officers to collect, validate and print information in the vehicle. Officers collect information by using either a notebook or pen-based computer. Information gathered with TraCS can be transferred to the TraCS office and the TraCS Enterprise database applications for reporting, analysis and retrieval.

The program works through a number of components. These modules include crash reporting, citation issuance, incident reporting, motor carrier inspection reporting, and operating while intoxicated reporting.

Data is entered into the system through a combination of text fields, pick lists, radio buttons, and check boxes, depending upon the requirement for each data element. The application also allows for defaults at each of the system, agency and user levels.

"Every time you enter a person into the system it creates a pick list," explained Mary Jensen, TraCS program manager in the Motor Vehicle Division of the Department of Transportation. "Users can then 'plug in' the same information in subsequent forms. A key benefit is it shares information from form to form and you don't have to re-key it."

The latest feature to be added to the program, the Software Development Kit (SDK), takes the program a step further by allowing customization at the agency level. The SDK permits local agencies to make new forms to add to the package and permits other states to modify it to be used with their forms.

This custom flexibility was developed from a lot of user input from officers on the street who provided feedback. Jensen also noted that it was a priority to create such flexibility. "We wanted to make the software flexible enough for any agency in Iowa, big or small, to use it without having to change their business practices."

As a result, it was built so that data can be easily moved from the laptop to the desktop at the agency through four methods: wirelessly from the field to the agency; on floppy disk from the field to the agency; dial-in modem; or direct cable connection. The application uses a layered architecture to enable compatibility with a wide variety of communication technologies.

TraCS also includes a central database repository, which stores all data collected in the field. In addition, the back-end database provides a complete, accurate, timely, and efficient tool for data analysis. TraCS is a data-collection package. As soon as reports written by the officers are entered into or transferred to the agency's TraCS computer, the information is immediately available for retrieval and/or analysis at the agency. Note: It is not searchable by the officer in his or her vehicle.

TraCS development evolved over an eight-year period at a cost of about \$5 million. Most of that money was generated from state and federal funds. Iowa invested heavily and over the years federal funds came from programs such as Federal Highway Administration, Safety Management Systems, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Motor Carrier Safety Assistance, and National Traffic Safety.

Federal support was granted as a result of a special provision -- the state offered to develop the software and then provide it royalty-free to other states. This move not only earned federal recognition, but it did what it intended - attract interest from other states.

Currently, New York, Colorado, Wisconsin, Tennessee and South Carolina are moving toward implementation of TraCS. Other interested states - including Arkansas, Arizona and South Dakota - are trying it out under a testing agreement.

## **Pennsylvania**

### **Incident Information Management System**

Pennsylvania State Police

Web site: <http://www.pspiims.com>

Contact: Ron Wilt

Tel: 717-561-6220

#### **BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY**

- *Since there were a lot of unknown business processes related to building the Incident Information Management System, a budget had to be defined using intelligent guesswork gleaned from figuring out the flow of information.*
- *A Change Advisory Group was chartered with the goal of identifying internal and external stakeholders to provide them with information about the project.*
- *A change management consultant was brought in to create communications mediums, such as monthly newsletters, Web sites updated in real time, and an e-mail box for submitting requests for information.*
- *The temptation to cut corners was avoided and old technology was not laid on top of an old business process. Instead the department fixed and streamlined the business processes before they inserted the technology to leverage those changes.*

One of the ongoing goals of law enforcement is to put as many officers on the streets as possible to deter crime. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Gov. Tom Ridge directed the Pennsylvania State Police to target and improve inefficient business processes that would in effect yield redeployed troopers through the application of technology.

The Pennsylvania State Police is implementing a new program, called the Incident Information Management System (IIMS) that will apply today's advanced technologies to crime-fighting activities. IIMS encompasses the application of technology to all activities related to the collection and processing of any and all information and evidence related to an event, as well as activities related to conducting investigations necessary to solve a crime or prevent further crimes from being committed. IIMS applications include Computer Aided Dispatch, Records Management, and Evidence Bar-Code Scanning.

Out of these activities, IIMS will accomplish the following goals: improve key department functions through extensive business process redesign by the troopers who perform them and the logical incorporation of the modern technology available; deployment of a full mobile office in all crime and patrol vehicles; deployment of an enterprise-wide information system, which allows information to be immediately available to troopers; and consolidation of the critical call-taking and dispatch function from 81 stations to five state-of-the-art dispatch centers.

The effort to put together a project of this scope required a lot of advanced planning and strategic thinking. Before the project could launch, IT experts at the State Police had to define a budget to request

funds. The only problem was that the definition of this budget had to be based on business processes that weren't even established. This problem was resolved through the use of intelligent guesswork.

"When you're dealing with a lot of concepts and high-level strategies and objectives, it's not clear how to devise a budget," explained Ron Wilt, IIMS program manager at the State Police. "We were doing a lot of things for reasons no one knew why. What we discovered was the way in which information flowed was often disconnected. There was also duplication of efforts. Since we couldn't begin the project until we had a budget, we made a lot of assumptions about those processes and systems, developed cost models, benchmarked against similar initiatives in the industry, solicited industry input, and ran 'should-cost' exercises with consultants."

The work to establish a budget turned out to be a small obstacle when compared with the next challenge – overcoming resistance to change. Since it's well known that workers tend to get entrenched in business processes and avoid change, it was quickly realized that this would be another hurdle, especially since a major focus of this project was about re-engineering business processes.

The first strategy was to form the Change Advisory Group that was chartered with the goal of identifying internal and external stakeholders to provide them with information. Stakeholders were identified as groups such as unions, 911 centers, commanders in local law enforcement agencies and others.

A change-management consultant was then brought in to create new communication mediums. This person recommended the creation of newsletters, Web sites that could be continually updated with real-time information, an e-mail box for submitting requests for information or questions about rumors, and more.

Finally, the last challenge was resisting the temptation to cut corners. "We didn't want to overlay a technology solution on an old business process," said Wilt. "We had to ensure the business process was fixed and streamlined before we inserted technology to leverage those changes to the business process. Then we had to sell management on the costs required to avoid cutting those corners."

Wilt added that management was convinced after they used examples of where technology has been applied in the past without fixing the process first. "Then we contrasted that with examples of how we did the right thing by fixing the process first."

The end result of this effort is the near completion of phase one which encompasses the business process re-engineering. Phase two begins October 2001 and will result in the implementation and design of IIMS. While phase one came in at a cost of about \$10 million, phase two is expected to cost over \$100 million.

The money, however, is being well-spent. The project will offer a number of benefits, including elimination of artificial staffing that is expected to re-deploy 173 troopers; increased information to better arm troopers and improve public safety; automatic vehicle location to help dispatch select the most appropriate resources and expedite their response to incidents; and increased efficiency from improved operations. All of these improvements are expected to put a total of 400 troopers back in the field to protect the public.

**Colorado**

**Department of Public Safety**

Colorado State Patrol

Web site: [http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/cdps/csp.htm](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cdps/csp.htm)

Contact: Doug Landin

Tel: 303-239-4563

**BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY**

- *The Information Technology Division organized a committee comprising troopers that represented a cross section of the department's personnel to analyze every business process a trooper performs in the field.*
- *The committee took 24 months to form a consensus of how the system should be designed.*

State troopers in Colorado are armed with more than weapons; they are armed with information available to them via technology. The Colorado State Patrol recently installed 400 mobile data computers (MDCs) in troopers' cars in hopes of making them more efficient while out in the field.

The MDC project -- a three-year endeavor currently in its first phase -- was launched to improve efficiencies of troopers by giving them an automated application and wireless access. Troopers had mobile data terminals connected to the AT&T Cellular Digital Packet Data Network installed in their cars. This system allows for direct access to accident reporting, citations, case reports, mapping, global positioning, mobile dispatch, and applications that access state and criminal databases. It also allows for car-to-car communications as well as car-to-dispatch communications. It is capable of communicating with any MDC in the state regardless of agency.

Starting summer 2001, troopers were given the ability to electronically submit, via the wireless network, accident reports or citations from the road to their immediate supervisor at any office for approval. If a report is approved, the supervisor can electronically provide the data to the Department of Revenue and the Colorado State Patrol Records Management System.

According to Project Manager Doug Landin, all of these components rolled out smoothly because of sound business practices. "If you're going to embark on a mobile data project you better have strong information technology support staff and a sound business process," he said. "Without either of those things you won't be able to receive ongoing funding and support to make it happen."

One of the first things Landin's Information Technology Division did was to organize a committee, which was composed of troopers that represented a cross section of the department. "We had people from the executive branch to administrative support," said Landin. "The IT people were there to simply be the ears of the group."

The group's goal was to analyze every business process a trooper performs in the field. "We considered every form, and its look and feel," he said. "Then the committee evaluated all of these processes and formed a consensus in about 24 months. Finally, we designed the applications, and it was relatively easy."

The group's input on the system design left little margin of error when it came to releasing the RFP. The specifications development was aided by a proof-of-concept process in which the department utilized a \$650,000 federal Cops More Grant (the ongoing project costs will be funded by state appropriations). "We had 100 development units to base the entire project on," explained Landin. "Because we had the pilot so well developed, the RFP specifications left no room for error. We already knew what we wanted, and there was no deviation from it, which is rare."

The project, which is nearly complete, will include future enhancements, such as: migrating the MDC projects to include the CSP motorcycle division; and providing links to the existing automated fingerprint identification system via the wireless network for submittal and retrieval of fingerprint information.

Overall, the project's success shows in the number of benefits it brings to the troopers in the field. "Troopers have indicated that they are 25 percent more efficient using the automated process and a single point of data entry," said Landin. "And that single point of entry has also eliminated three additional points of entry by the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Revenue (both departments also use the information)."



## Indiana

### Judicial Technology and Automation Project

Indiana Supreme Court

Web site: <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/supreme/>

Contact: Kurt Snyder

Tel: 317-232-2542

#### BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY

- *Lack of necessary funds has resulted in creative funding relationships between the state and the local jurisdictions to create the software.*

Law enforcement has routinely faced the challenge of connecting its many levels – from the police on the streets to judges in the chambers – to effectively communicate about an offender. It is not unheard of for an offender to cross a county line only to find law enforcement officers unaware of the individual’s crime or record; however this is about to change in the state of Indiana.

The Indiana Supreme Court is working to improve its law enforcement connectivity so that all entities involved with an offender have real-time information. The Supreme Court is currently developing what’s called the Judicial Technology and Automation Project in hopes of providing trial court information more quickly and efficiently to trial court users, law enforcement agencies, state policy makers, and the public.

The new system, which recently received \$6 million in state funds, will do the following: allow Indiana trial courts and court clerks to manage their caseloads faster and more cost-effectively; provide users of Indiana trial court information more accurate and comprehensive information; reduce the cost of trial court operations borne by Indiana counties; and examine the feasibility of implementing important technological innovations in Indiana trial courts.

The idea to develop these features is based on an existing system that has two or three weeks of wait time associated with it. “If someone goes to court and let’s say it’s for a DUI or driving with a suspended license, it would be great if that information was sent to the Department of Motor Vehicles in real time,” said Kurt Snyder, director of Counsel Trial Court Technology at the Indiana Supreme Court. “Right now, there’s a delay between systems. It often takes a couple weeks for information to be put into a system and in the meantime someone gets pulled over only for the officer to find [out-of-date] information about him or her.”

Currently, the system is still in its infancy with more work ahead before its full implementation. One of the system’s challenges has been getting the counties on board. The counties have become accustomed to working independently and have resisted the idea of a centrally managed system.

“We’ve been [hampered] by counties that have historically funded their own systems,” said Snyder. “These counties have often used little coordination among related agencies and the systems they use are fairly antiquated. It’s been challenging to get them to understand that we need to coordinate a single system on a central level.”

Since the state did not fully fund the program at the Supreme Court’s initial \$12 million request, program officials have opted to use this dilemma with the counties as a springboard to reconfigure how to implement the system. They have approached the DMV and State Police to see what they can contribute, and they have examined how to creatively work with the counties to supply their own systems. They are currently exploring several options including: creating standards and allowing the counties to buy what they want; buying off-the-shelf software and telling the counties to purchase that software; or buying off-the-shelf software and telling the counties to do what they want as long as they meet the standards.

Once the project has resolved how to fully implement it across all counties, the benefits to overall communication will make it well worth the inherent struggles of managing the process. “The most important aspect is that information will be more accurate and timely,” said Snyder. “What that means in theory is that the state is a safer place to live. When troopers pull people over and information is pulled up, it will be accurate and the person can be handled appropriately.”

Also, Snyder believes the savings to taxpayers will be great. “Since information will be communicated across county lines, people who owe fees in one county can take care of those fees in another county. Information is shared and revenue is increased. This is really a faster, more use friendly system.”

## Georgia

### E-Filing System

Georgia Courts Automation Commission

Web site: <http://www.ganet.org/gcac/>

Contact: Jerry Garland

Tel: 404-651-8165

### BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY

- *The e-filing project required the creation of seamless functionality among multiple vendors' systems. Vendors met this requirement by cooperating and sharing intellectual property.*
- *A hands-on, personal sales approach persuaded lawyers resistant to using the system to change their minds.*

E-government applications have been steadily implemented in governments across the nation. Now the Georgia Courts Automation Commission is getting involved in the e-government revolution by developing its own electronic filing system (e-filing).

The e-filing project launched in August 2000 when the Commission officially signed contracts with the four suppliers it would be working with on the pilot. Commission officials wanted to test the capabilities of the four suppliers, Efiling.com, @Court.com, Verilaw.com and Counterclaim.com, which are supplying a Web-based common interface to the local courts and the clerks. Officials went with four suppliers instead of one in order to test the different business models and try different interfaces.

“Initially, we went out to obtain information from private suppliers to see if they could respond and implement systems at the courts to electronically file and provide case management,” said Jerry Garland, executive director for the Georgia Court Automation Commission. “Georgia is a diversified state with 159 counties and numerous case management systems already in place -- none of which were compatible for sharing information.”

The commission wanted to establish an e-filing system that would include a case management module that used legal XHTML that would enable lawyers in one court to seamlessly file their cases in another court's case management system using the same interface. Four different courts – two state and two superior – began working with the suppliers to use the filing interface via the Internet. Additionally, fees could be paid over the system through that same interface.

The system works very simply. A clerk logs on in the morning and checks the status of filings. Portable file format (PDF) files are placed in XML envelopes that the clerk opens to review the filing and document it. The clerk makes the decision to either accept or reject the filing. If it's rejected it's sent back to the filer with the reason for rejection. Accepted files are e-stamped or approved and the stamp is

embedded into the case management system. Then the filer is notified the case has been accepted and the appropriate fees are requested.

The way the system is constructed provides a number of benefits, including: the ability for a local clerk to view one interface regardless of who is filing from another court; the increase in usage by giving users a single system to learn; the opportunity to save time and effort since most data input is done by the filer or lawyers; the increased efficiency gained from the elimination of travel to and from the court; the convenience of filing after hours; the provision of interoperability that gives lawyers the means to file in more than one court when a court case is changed.

However, the system's straightforward simplicity belies its true complexity. Its very functionality and seamless quality required a cooperative effort among the vendors -- it also proved to be one of the project's few challenges. "The suppliers had to understand the required commonality among applications and the code that makes them work," explained Garland. "This meant that the vendors had to accept sharing intellectual property. In time, we worked everything out."

Even after the differences were resolved, there was still another challenge to be handled -- gaining user acceptance from the lawyers. As is usually the case, the lawyers weren't fond of the change. It required Garland and his staff to do essentially a sales job. "It was about selling a service in a very personal way. The vendors and the courts contacted them. Judges even called and explained what the commission was trying to do and asked if the lawyers were interested," he said.

Now that most of the difficulties are resolved, Garland is looking ahead toward enhancing the system and getting more courts using it. "We're looking forward to the pilot's successful conclusion in either August or September," Garland added. "I think the final project is going to be widely adopted by all of the courts at all levels."

**Florida**

**Video Conferencing**

Department of Corrections

Web site: <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/contact.html>

Contact: Scott McPherson

Tel: 850-488-7241

**BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY**

- *IT staff personally visited wardens to reassure them that there would be no trouble going “behind the wire” to install the video conferencing system.*
- *Technology upgrades require constant awareness of the need to train and retrain staff.*

Video conferencing technology cuts down on travel time and expense. At least it did at the Florida Department of Corrections (DOC) that built a downlink network of 35 video conferencing sites at prisons across the state. This extensive network has saved the state between its launch in 1994 to date \$2.8 million in travel costs, while the system itself only cost \$1.6 million to build.

Costs were saved because the DOC regularly uses one-way conferencing in 35 of its 57 institutions by using satellite links through TelStar, the state provider, and a fiber-optic network. Video Conferencing is used to conduct meetings, in-service and similar events. As part of the network, the DOC has a TV production studio that is able to broadcast to all 35 institutions simultaneously. Government officials use the studio to produce projects such as public service announcements.

“The DOC’s TV capabilities are the best in state government,” said Scott McPherson, chief information officer for the DOC. “It’s even better than the governor’s professional quality facility. In fact, everyone agrees it’s the finest TV production studio in state government.”

The program also boasts two-way communications that are used for a program, called Reading Family Ties, in five institutions. This program allows mothers in the state’s facilities to electronically visit with their children in non-profit sites that are closer to their homes.

Additionally, it allows the state to provide education for inmates to earn a GED through a complete electronic classroom. Educational programs are managed through 175 vocational teachers teaching 45 skills. The featured programs are: 10 sites that offer computer repair programs, and five sites designed to refurbish surplus computers for Florida kids.

Recently, the educational component was augmented to include two new areas. It added a Microsoft A+ Certification program for inmates that has resulted in many graduates getting high-paying jobs after serving their time. It also began developing educational opportunities for youthful offenders, whose needs

were previously overlooked. Educational curriculum for youth include two programs, Crossroads Café and Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?.

DOC staff can take advantage of its professional development aspects as well. A new DVD feature allows information to be stored and downloaded for users to view at their leisure. Also, staff uses it for two-way site meetings to discuss issues such as security, health care or substance abuse. Staff can also utilize the program's distance learning capabilities.

Perhaps the system's greatest benefit and feature is its recent expansion to work with the courts to deal with arraignments and hearings while an inmate is in the correctional facility. "Using video conferencing eliminates the potential for an inmate to attempt a prison break while in transport," said McPherson. "The inmate is still safe behind bars in a virtual courtroom. It has worked so well that the Office of the State Court Administrator is seeking a way to roll out two-way conferencing into just about every court house in the state of Florida."

What has made this program so successful isn't necessarily all of its capabilities. It is an excellent example of how IT leaders can use their personal powers of persuasion to overcome resistance to something new. Bill Woolley, chief of the Bureau of Educational Services at the DOC, said that many wardens were reluctant to allow technicians to install this new technology at the prisons. "Some wardens didn't understand the necessity and didn't feel it was advisable to go behind the wires to lay down the cement and install the steer-able dishes."

Wooley explained that three different people had to go around the state and talk to the wardens. "They literally had to sit down with the wardens and walk them through the process," he said. "Once they understood the overall benefits and what we were trying to do, they became very supportive."

Now as the technology changes, the biggest challenge is keeping up and maintaining the system's integrity. "The technology is moving so fast and we can't keep enough people trained to us it," said Wooley. "Every time we upgrade the system, we have to consider the people factor. If you train 30 people today in two years there is only 20 people left who know how to use it and in three years maybe only 10 or 15. So not only to we try to continually purchase the best equipment, but we also have to keep training at the forefront of our plans."

According to McPherson it's simply a system in a constant state of change. "Its mission has expanded and morphed over the years from being an educational and distance learning tool to being totally interactive with fax, e-mail and other communications devices. It's a powerful communications tool to have – and the DOC wants to leverage that tool to the maximum."

## **Resources**

### **Social Services and Law Enforcement and The Courts Project Summaries**

*Following are summaries of projects similar to those highlighted as best of breed in this report. These projects were pulled from the 2001 Digital States Survey, Part I: Social Services and Law Enforcement and The Courts. These summaries provide examples of information technology projects that are either launched or being piloted across the 50 states.*

## **Social Services**

### **Arizona**

- The Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families manage the Children's Information Library and Data Source (CHILDS) project. It integrates all program data into one common application and provides access to that information according to the logistical functional requirements of the program. Its goal is to develop one common system to support all of the program areas with specific emphasis on developing a model software application that supports the functions of social service field caseworkers.

### **Colorado**

- The Colorado Department of Human Services implemented the Colorado Electronic Benefit Transfer Service (COEBTS) and completed statewide implementation in 1998. COEBTS replaces the state/county systems of payrolls and county printing of paper warrants and issuance of food stamp coupons with an EBT debit card and direct deposit option for clients and providers. Over \$500 million in payments are made annually through COEBTS.

### **Delaware**

- The Delaware Virtual Career Network has developed a partnership with America's Job Bank to provide job seekers with the ability to create their own resume and place it in a talent bank accessible by employers, search through electronic job bank for a job, research occupations, and review training opportunities.

### **Illinois**

- The Illinois Occupational Information Coordinating Committee maintains Illinois Resource Information System (IRIS), a statewide database of education and training programs and supportive human services, particularly those that support a person's employability. Among these are training programs offered by Workforce Investment Act-certified providers, child-care resource and referral, financial assistance, transportation, personal and family counseling, and job search and placement techniques. IRIS lists nearly 19,000 services, offered at 4,400 locations throughout Illinois and neighboring states.
- Illinois Department of Employment Security launched its Internet-based Skills Match system (ISM). The system provides intelligent matching of job requirements posted by employers with the skills posted by job seekers. The system, which is available 24 hours, seven days a week, includes analysis tools that enable job seekers, training providers and state agencies involved in workforce preparation activities to identify training needs of job seekers registered in the system.

### **Indiana**

- Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, Hoosier Healthwise, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) will have enrollment/application processing capability through the Common Front End Project. This project provides technology solutions to simplify and streamline application processing across multiple databases. This plan incorporates screening and referral and explores the possibility of crosschecking an individual's identity and program participation in other systems (e.g. Social Security Administration, Child Support and/or the Bureau of Motor



Vehicles). Additionally, it will link social workers from private and non-profit organizations throughout the state to the Indiana application process via a single portal.

## **Kansas**

- The Department of Human Resources employment agency is entirely available and interactive online. Job seekers can view extensive listings of jobs by city or county in Kansas, receive help constructing a resume, and posting that resume online for employers to review. Employers may create a job posting and search for candidates. The Job Link site also contains a list of state-licensed child-care providers. In addition, if someone is registered for unemployment insurance, searching the Job Link site qualifies as his or her weekly registration for employment.

## **Kentucky**

- The Commonwealth of Kentucky, under the sponsorship and partial funding of the Empower Kentucky Program, is pursuing a project entitled Commonwealth Access to Resources. The first phase of this program is to develop a common registration process for three major statewide systems. These systems represent food stamp, Medicaid, child support, and child welfare programs. It will link information of an individual currently located in multiple systems by registering that person in a central client index and assigning a master participant identifying number. This number will also be stored in the legacy systems. In addition, the registration process will provide for single intake of over 40 data elements.

## **Louisiana**

- The state of Louisiana's EBT Card System replaced food stamp coupons and monthly cash benefit checks. Benefits are posted to the recipient's account during the first five days of the month and food stamp benefits are posted during the first 14 days of the month. Benefits are secure and accessible by the PIN holder. As purchases are made at the grocery store checkout lane or ATMs, recipient accounts are debited electronically and the recipient is provided a receipt.

## **Maryland**

- Maryland provides a statewide EBT program for the issuance of food stamps and cash benefits. The EBT network is made up of over 100,000 benefit recipients, 3,200 merchants, and 470,000 ATMs. The EBT "Independence Card" can also be used to pay gas and electric bills, public housing rent, and group-home expenses.

## **Mississippi**

- The state of Mississippi deployed its first statewide client/server information system. As part of this new system, caseworkers will be allowed to process the client's intake/eligibility forms online via the Mississippi Department of Human Services network. The caseworkers have intranet capability to send and retrieve messages.

## **Ohio**

- OhioWorks represents the state's workforce development system and the agency's portal for interaction between employers and Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. It contains a Labor Market Information application providing local labor market and provider information to employers, job seekers and local organizations. It also features a Skill-Match application that provides a job-matching service that links job seekers and employers in labor exchange activities. Finally, its latest feature provides job seekers with information on open positions and employers. It also has a place to post jobs.

## **Texas**

- The Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System project was created to implement several improvements in the delivery of social service programs administered by the Texas Department of Human Services. The project's primary goals include replacing several outdated automation

systems with one state-of-the-art integrated system and changing the agency's business process to improve accuracy and the delivery of services to millions of Texans. It will incorporate client/server technology, use of a relational database management system, and a graphical user interface.

## **Washington**

- Washington's EBT program uses magnetic-strip cards that allow access to accounts in a central database. Every month, each account is updated and benefits added. These cards can be used as point-of-sale devices to pay bills or obtain cash, thereby avoiding fee-based ATMs. Five benefits can be retrieved through the cards, which are: federal and state food stamps, federal and state TANF grants, state refugee benefits, state general assistance benefits, and state consolidated emergency program benefits.

## **Law Enforcement and the Courts**

### **Colorado**

- The Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) has video capabilities at 12 sites with anticipated expansion to additional sites as funding permits. CDOC utilizes video conferencing for telemedicine, federal court hearings and arraignments, Parole Board hearings, Community Corrections/Youthful Offender service reviews, CDOC administrative and business meetings, and departmental training.

### **Connecticut**

- The Criminal Justice Information System is implementing an Offender-Based Tracking System, a four-year initiative to integrate many different agency information systems to more effectively and efficiently track offenders and their associated cases. It would take information from 15 different legacy systems and process offender information about 52 different events and functions.

### **Illinois**

- The Department of Corrections participates in an extensive statewide video conferencing network where every Correctional Center has video conferencing installed or has access to a video-conferencing site within close proximity to the institution.

### **Louisiana**

- The Louisiana Supreme Court is developing an Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS) to be piloted first in the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court and later to be transferred to other parts of the state. The IJJIS will be an integrated system that includes functions of the juvenile court, including docketing, calendaring, scheduling, document generation, case tracking, warrant tracking, service of process/notice tracking, disposition tracking, action tracking, reporting, automated minute entries, and accounting. It will also integrate all case types, and facilitate and address data sharing among all agencies dealing with the juvenile court.

### **Mississippi**

- The Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) has been developing a computer program with the Supreme Court's Information Systems Department (IS) that will integrate all of the State's Youth Courts. AOC and IS are also working on an Electronic Data Interchange that will allow the AOC to obtain statistical information from the trial courts' computers. The Youth Court program will alert a Youth Court Judge in another county if a particular juvenile is a repeat offender. The Department of Human Services will have access to certain information in the Youth Court database.

## **New Jersey**

- The New Jersey State Police have mobile data technologies for officers. They are linked to a digital communication network. Real-time communication is allowed, as is vehicle-to-vehicle communication. The search engine can retrieve information on license plates, driver's licenses and so forth. The system also allows field report writing.
- The Family Court handles all of its cases through a single computer application, the Family Automated Case Tracking System (FACTS). It records nine of the 10 different types of cases that the Family Court manages, as well as juvenile probation cases. Within that application, the same party record is used in each of the Family Court cases in which the individual is involved anywhere in the state, thus linking together all the cases to the person.

## **North Carolina**

- The Criminal Justice Information Network mobile data network currently has over 5,000 clients operating on the 800MHz network. It allows law enforcement personnel to check vehicles, licenses and criminal histories online. It is being extended to new uses, including automating the citation process from the traffic stop to the courtroom.

## **South Dakota**

- The South Dakota Unified Judicial System currently has a centralized court case management database with criminal, accounting, protection orders, and adult probation all integrated and pointing to one central "person" or demographic file. Additionally, juvenile case management is being piloted and this database will also be integrated with existing systems.

## **Texas**

- The Dallas County Juvenile Information System is a cooperative effort among juvenile probation, municipal courts, public schools, law enforcement, and the prosecution to share information electronically through a Web-based environment. The system collects and compiles juvenile justice information from all relevant agencies and allows the relevant agencies to use this system as their primary juvenile justice data system.